

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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R 240809Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1764
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 8105

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CGEN, APER
SUBJEC: CONSULAR STAFFING AND REQUEST FOR TDY ASSISTANCE

REF (A) BOMBAY 0474 (B) STATE 98965

1. CONGEN BOMBAY'S NEED FOR AN ADDITIONAL AMERICAN POSITION AND TWO PERMANENT LOCAL POSITIONS (REFTEL A) IN CONSULAR SECTION IS BECOMING ACUTE AS WORKLOAD CONTINUES TO EXCEED CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH IT. (CONVERSION OF TWO PIT POSITIONS AUHORIZED REFTTEL (B) UNTIL 9/30

/78

WOULD MEET NEED FOR ADDITIONAL LOCALS FOR AT LEAST NEXT YEAR).

2. THE AREAS SUFFERING MOST ARE (A) THE GROWING BACKLOG OF IV APPLICANTS, (B) HANDLING OF PETITIONS SUBMITTED BY AMERICAN CITIZENS, AND (C) SERVICES FOR DISTRESSED AMERICANS. IF IMPROVEMENT IS NOT MADE SOON IN LATTER TWO CATEGORIES SERIOUS COMPLAINTS FROM CONG-

RESS AND OTHER INFLUENTIAL BODIES IN THE US ARE INEVITABLE. TO MEET PRESSING DEMANDS IN THESE AREAS IT HAS BEEN NECESSARY TO DIVERT RESOURCES FROM VISA ISSUANCE; THIS JUST INCREASES BACKLOG AND CANNOT CONTINUE WITH PEAK SPRING SUMMER PERIOD JUST BEGINNING.

3. A MONTH AGO THE IV BACKLOG WAS REDUCED FROM AN EIGHT WEEKS TO A SIX WEEKS WAITING PERIOD; NOW IT IS BACK UP TO EIGHT WEEKS AND WILL
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PAGE 02 NEW DE 08105 240942Z

SOON BECOME EVEN LONGER. PART OF THIS PROBLEM STEMS FROM SETTING RECORDS EACH MONTH IN NUMBERS OF IMMIGRANT VISAS ISSUED AT BOMBAY. IN MAY, CONGEN ISSUED 757, TOPPING THE ALL TIME HIGH OF 724 OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH.

4. AN ANCILLARY EFFECT OF THE IV VISA BACKLOG IS A LARGE INCREASE IN CORRESPONDENCE, PARTLY CONGRESSIONAL, URGING CONGEN TO SPEED UP

PROCESSING. HANDLING THIS CORRESPONDENCE OF COURSE DETRACTS FROM ABILITY TO REDUCE THE BACKLOG.

5. IT WAS HOPED THAT WITH PASSING OF WINTER SEASON DEMANDS FOR SERVICES TO AMERICANS IN DISTRESS WOULD DECLINE. HOWEVER, THERE CURRENTLY ARE THREE FACING COURT HEARINGS, THREE IN HOSPITALS, AND ONE PSYCHIATRIC CASE REQUIRING MUCH ATTENTION FROM CONGEN.

6. THE NIV SEASON IS JUST GETTING INTO FULL SWING. BOMBAY ISSUED OVER 2,000 NIVS IN APRIL A NEAR RECORD, AND THE NUMBER WILL BE EVEN LARGER IN MAY. AT THE SAME TIME CONGEN IS FACED WITH TRANSFERS AND LEAVE PROBLEMS WHICH WILL DETRACT FURTHER FROM ABILITY TO COPE WITH THE PROBLEM. THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER WILL DEPART ON TRANSFER 7/15/78, AND HIS REPLACEMENT IS NOT SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE UNTIL THE END OF SEPTEMBER 1978. TO FILL IN, ONE OF THE CONSULAR OFFICERS MUST DEVOTE AT LEAST 60 PERCENT OF HIS TIME TO ADMIN. AT THE SAME TIME ANOTHER CONSULAR OFFICER, JOHN BRADY, IS HAVING TO FILL IN FOR THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL OFFICER WHO IS ON HOME LEAVE AND WILL HIMSELF DEPART ON TRANSFER EARLY AUGUST. CONSEQUENTLY CONGEN WILL HAVE ONLY TWO CONSULAR OFFICERS ON HAND TO DEAL FULL TIME WITH A STAGGERING WORKLOAD IN JULY AND AUGUST, THE PEAK OF STUDENT VISA SEASON.

7. THE LONG-TERM SOLUTION IS THE ADDITION OF ANOTHER AMERICAN POSITION TO CONGEN CONSULAR STAFF, AS WELL AS THE CONVERSION OF THE TWO PITS MENTIONED IN PARA ONE. SINCE IT IS PROBABLY NOT UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 NEW DE 08105 240942Z

REALISTIC TO EXPECT ANOTHER AMERICAN TO BE IN PLACE BY JULY THE DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO CONSIDER PROVIDING INTERIM RELIEF BY TDYING AN EXPERIENCED CONSULAR OFFICER TO BOMBAY FROM 7/1/78 THROUGH 9/30/78. THE EMBASSY WHICH HAS SIMILAR OVERLOAD SITUATION CANNOT HELP.

8. EMBASSY AND CONGEN ARE VERY MUCH AWARE OF IMPORTANCE OF IMPROVING CONSULAR SERVICES BUT WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN EVEN CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICES UNLESS HELP IS FORTHCOMING.
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